

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 254 624

CE 040 362

TITLE Adult Learners: Key to the Nation's Future.
INSTITUTION Commission on Higher Education and the Adult Learner, Columbia, MD.
SPONS AGENCY American Council on Education, Washington, D.C.; Council for the Advancement of Experiential Learning, Columbia, Md.; Maryland Univ., College Park. Univ. Coll.
PUB DATE Nov 84
NOTE 22p.
AVAILABLE FROM Commission on Higher Education and the Adult Learner, 10598 Marble Faun Court, Columbia, MD 21044.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (130)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Access to Education; *Adult Education; Adult Literacy; Change Strategies; *College Role; Cooperative Planning; Delivery Systems; Educational Cooperation; Educational Improvement; *Educational Needs; Educational Objectives; *Educational Policy; Federal Aid; Financial Support; *Government Role; Grants; Higher Education; Illiteracy; *Policy Formation; Position Papers; School Business Relationship; School Community Relationship; School Districts; State Action

ABSTRACT

For reasons of National interest embedded in the economic, political, and social determinants of the quality of life, the fostering of learning by adults is an immediate and compelling National need that requires a lucid and forthright statement of National policy and immediate attention by the Nation's colleges and universities. To meet this need, it is imperative that the Federal Government and the major providers of education and training to adults take definitive actions directed at meeting the following major challenges: developing or renewing employability for the unemployed, maintaining and enhancing occupational skills in the face of technological change, eliminating adult illiteracy, providing equal access to education for all adults, and developing knowledgeable citizens in an information and technological society. Recommended Federal actions in the area of financing adult learning include the stimulation of innovation in the delivery of adult education through institutional grants, encouragement of the development of improved delivery systems through multiyear challenge grants, provision of financial assistance to needy adult learners and of voucher assistance to unemployed persons, and elimination of present disincentives to adult learning in the tax system. Efforts must also be increased to develop new partnerships among labor, business, government, and higher education through such avenues as regional conferences and National, regional, and local communications networks. (Appended to this position paper are a description of a program for Federal support of adult learning and an outline of the Institutional Self-assessment Project.) (MN)

ADULT LEARNERS: Key to the Nation's Future

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10598 Marble Faun Court
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November, 1984

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Executive Summary

The Commission on Higher Education and the Adult Learner, composed of 40 leaders from education, business, labor, and the community, has outlined the United States' need for a new emphasis on adult learning and has suggested specific programs to meet that need. Building on numerous other studies and reports, the Commission points out that the United States is in an increasingly competitive economic struggle, at a time when there are fewer new workers each year and when technology is rapidly changing every facet of the economy. They argue that our major resource is human capital and that this poses a new challenge to the nations' providers of education and training for adults, a challenge that must be met without diminishing national commitment to the education of its youth.

For reasons of national interest embedded in the economic, political, and social determinants of the quality of life, the fostering of learning by adults is an immediate and compelling national need, a need requiring a lucid and forthright statement of national policy and immediate attention by the nation's colleges and universities.

The Commission urges specific action by the federal government and by the major participants in providing education and training to adults, action directed at meeting five major challenges:

- developing or renewing employability for the unemployed;
- maintaining and enhancing occupational skills in the face of technological change;
- eliminating adult illiteracy;
- providing equal access to education for all adults; and
- developing knowledgeable citizens in an information-technological society.

There are significant impediments to meeting these challenges. They include institutional barriers, particularly within many senior colleges and universities that do not see serving adult learners as within their mission and that resist making the accommodations necessary to serve adults well. Inadequate funding for institutions and individuals is another impediment, as is the lack of awareness among adults of the opportunities open to them.

Through its Institutional Self-Assessment Project, the Commission is seeking to stimulate change within the colleges and universities so that adults will be served more effectively and collaboration with

sponsors and other providers will expand the learning opportunities for adults. The Commission is currently examining options open to the states in strengthening programs and services for adult learners. And the Commission is recommending broad federal action to include:

- Stimulating innovation in the delivery of adult learning services through institutional grants;
- Enhancing the capacity of institutions to deliver services to adult learners through multi-year challenge grants with a declining federal share;
- Providing financial assistance to needy adult learners;
- Encouraging adult learning among the unemployed through a voucher plan;
- Eliminating present disincentives to adult learning, principally within the tax structure; and
- Bridging the information gap, in partnership with the states, through comprehensive adult learning information and counseling services.

The Commission holds that sound long-term solutions rest on collaboration among the sectors and a fair sharing of costs among the beneficiaries of adult learning. To these ends, the Commission also promotes:

- regional conferences of labor, business, government, and higher education to address regional adult education issues;
- increased intersector collaboration among national labor unions, business associations, corporate executives, elected officials, trainers and continuing educators;
- new national, regional, and local communications networks among those addressing these national needs; and
- additional proposals for funding adult learner services at state and local levels.

I. Introduction

The Commission on Higher Education and the Adult Learner was established by the American Council on Education in 1981 to recommend public policy and organizational and institutional arrangements that would provide new and increased opportunities for adult learners. Now co-sponsored by ACE, the Council for the Advancement of Experiential Learning (CAEL) and The University of Maryland University College, the Commission has three main agenda:

- developing public policies, both state and federal, that address the needs of the nation for adult learning;
- helping institutions of higher education to clarify their roles and to serve adult learners better; and
- stimulating effective cooperation and division of labor among associations that serve adult learners.

During the past three years, the Commission has conducted nationwide hearings and held numerous meetings with leaders from education, business, labor, and the community. Based on these deliberations and numerous other studies and reports, it is the conviction of the Commission that national attention must be focused on adult learning as a major resource in solving the nation's economic and social dilemmas. The Commission believes that the ongoing pursuit of learning by adults throughout their years of competence is no longer a luxury for this society. It is a necessity. It is essential to three critical public needs: economic strength through increased productivity and international competitiveness; social equity in the interest of political stability; and enhancement of the quality of life for all citizens.

This paper calls for a new nationwide emphasis on adult learning and suggests specific programs to meet those critical needs. It cites five major tasks that have direct bearing on current economic and political conditions, as part of a broad array that includes liberal learning, and other educational needs with long-term implications for the quality of life. These priorities pose an immediate challenge to the nation's resources for learning.

II. The Case for Action

The United States is in an increasingly competitive economic struggle, at a time when there are fewer new workers each year and when technology is rapidly changing every facet of the economy. Anthony Patrick Carnevale reports that "between 1963 and 1975, the United States' share of the world's skilled workers has fallen from 29% to 26%. Internationally, the United States has dropped from second to seventh place in the level of skilled workers."¹ Numerous other studies and reports have underlined our increasingly critical position as we strive for technological and economic health. As this scenario unfolds, the nation's population is getting increasingly older. Hodgkinson estimates that workers currently in the work force will constitute over 90% of the work force in 1990.² In such a setting, human resources become the nation's most precious resource. In fact, over the past 50 years, the dominant factor accounting for growth in national income has been *human resources*—not capital or land—and this trend is projected to continue through 1990.³ We must urgently and carefully develop these human resources to their fullest.

These trends and the demographic shift to an increasingly adult society provide a new challenge to the nation's resources for learning, a challenge that must be met without diminishing national commitment to the education of its youth. As we move through the 1980's and 1990's, we face five major tasks in developing our human resources fully:

- developing or renewing employability for the unemployed;
- maintaining and enhancing occupational skills in the face of technological change;
- eliminating adult illiteracy;
- providing equal access to education for all adults; and
- developing knowledgeable citizens in an information-technological society.

Recurrent Structural Unemployment: Carnevale estimates that during the 1980's about 1% of the work force, more than 1,000,000 workers will become victims of structural unemployment. They will lose their jobs as a result of technological change, shifting prices, new products, and foreign competition.⁴ We know from the experience of auto workers that 15 to 20% of these workers will never return to former jobs nor find work using their current skills. A major educa-

tional effort is required to maintain employability of persons displaced from obsolete occupations. Yet many current programs do not work well enough. Neither institutions nor students are adequately prepared for the task. We need to develop a new sophisticated combination of educational services: assessment, guidance, instruction, and placement.

Maintaining Occupational Skills: The United States urgently needs a more competent work force: as Carnevale puts it, "smarter workers working smarter." Yet the problem will not be solved by a one-time catch-up in worker competence, for the occupational context continues to change rapidly. For example, the private domestic market for robots is expected to quadruple in the next three years, and computer-assisted design, manufacturing, and testing sales in 1984 are predicted to be more than 10 times those of 1980.⁵

The nation needs what Ernest Lynton calls "occupational maintenance" to enable employed people, from the most sophisticated professional to the so-called "unskilled", to remain effective in a constantly changing occupational context. American firms currently spend an average of only \$300 per employee annually on worker training while spending \$3300 per employee on capital investment.⁶ Clearly, we must redirect our investment and effort in order to raise the quality of the American work force.

Adult Illiteracy: Although 99% of U.S. citizens over age 13 can read and write in some language, illiteracy is a major problem. The illiterate 1% comes to more than 1,500,000 adult citizens who cannot read and write any language. Those numbers are further swelled by the "functional illiterates", those who cannot read and write well enough to function in our society. This group has been estimated to range from 25,000,000 to 45,000,000 people—the equivalent of the combined populations of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland. In a democracy of growing complexity and sophistication, functional illiteracy cannot be ignored. Essential re-education, special efforts to enable new workers to enter the work force, and effective citizenship rest on basic literacy skills.

Equal Access: America cannot afford the injustice of an educational underclass, less schooled than either their abilities warrant or equity requires, and ill-equipped to continue their learning. Nevertheless, barriers to equal educational opportunity remain. Unequal access has

devastating results. For example, under existing federal student financial aid policies, a single, working mother with a college-aged daughter can obtain financial aid for her daughter to attend college full time but cannot receive any aid for herself to take one college course to improve her occupational skills. Likewise, the unemployment rate in October 1980 for high school dropouts of that year was nearly 70% higher than that for graduates, and within that group of dropouts, the unemployment rate for blacks was more than twice that for whites.

Citizenship in an Information-Technological Society: America's rapid shift from an industrial to an information-technological society whose emphasis is no longer products but services has a profound effect on contemporary citizenship. John Strange notes that with computer capability goes power: access to information and education as well as success, better income, and other rewards.⁷ Not only must the employed and the employable be re-educated to the relevant technologies, but citizens in general must be enabled to function effectively in an increasingly technical environment. Contemporary citizenship calls for a new level of sophistication: comprehension and competence in the technologies as well as the ability to evaluate propaganda and political argumentation and the disposition and ability to participate actively in the democratic process. Significant efforts are required to reduce the gaps between the requisite understanding and the current state of adult knowledge and skills in technology of their society and in citizenship responsibilities.

Competence as the Goal of Adult Education: We cannot measure our success in meeting these five challenges with semester hours or grade point averages. Adults measure their success in terms of their competences. Increasingly, research and theory on education and on occupational success are defining the outcomes that must be addressed in programs for adult learning. The competencies and characteristics required for literacy, employability, occupational success and effective citizenship are examined in another Commission paper.⁸ It is critical to note, however, that we will meet this need for adult learning in ways that are different from those we use to educate our youth.

III. Impediments to Meeting the Need

There are significant impediments to meeting the nation's need for adult learning; chief among them are the following.

Institutional Barriers: Senior colleges and universities too frequently do not envision themselves as providers of educational services to adults. They place high priority on traditional missions: research, teaching to conventional clienteles, and public service in the form of agricultural extension, technology transfer, consultation, cultural events, etc. Two kinds of exceptions are worth noting, however: First, a large group of universities have significant units dedicated to continuing education. But most often those units have limited curricular scope and restricted scheduling and degree-granting authority, and are handicapped by their self-supporting financial status. Second, a growing number of small colleges are actively seeking to serve the needs of adult learners, often motivated in part, at least, by critical declines in their enrollment of traditional students. And, of course, from the beginning the two-year community colleges have seen adult learners as a major clientele and provide useful models for senior institutions to examine, if they are to serve adult learners well.

But there is significant resistance within many four-year colleges and universities to making the accommodation necessary to serve adult learners with full and equal effectiveness. This is attested to by representatives of business, industry, and other organizations who have sought to negotiate with universities and colleges for undergraduate and graduate level educational programs. And state higher education officials note the lack of pressure from public universities for programs, services and funding to meet adult learner needs. In spite of the recent evidence of change on many campuses, higher education institutions themselves remain a major impediment to addressing the nation's needs for resources for adult learning. They appear unready to recognize the magnitude of the need and to confront the requisite changes.

These changes are not insignificant. Much about postsecondary education is inappropriate for adult learners; within the present system, there is excessive standardization, insufficient individualization, needless repetition, and inadequate recognition of prior learning. State funding formulas are too frequently obsolete, ignoring part-time students and those in continuing education units. Rigidity of schedules,

opposition to part-time faculty and off-campus locations, and anxiety about new partnerships hamper collaboration with business, industry and others with educational needs. What appears to be a golden opportunity for cooperation among education providers is very slow in coming; the higher education establishment must change if it is to be an effective partner.

Inadequate Funding: Even institutions that wish to serve adults have difficulty adapting to their needs because few funds are available for design or redesign of programs and services for adults that must differ in nature and scope from those for youth. Ineptly designed and managed instruction and support services can spell disappointment for the students and the institution.⁹ Almost no funds are available to pay tuition for the unemployed or for the employed who have no access to employer-sponsored tuition-assistance plans. Most current student financial aid programs are restricted to accredited institutions and require at least half-time enrollment, more than most working adults can manage. Funds for other kinds of postsecondary training are almost non-existent, as are funds for living expenses for the unemployed during retraining. Until individuals and institutions have more and broader support from federal and state governments, progress will be slow.

Lack of Awareness: Adults are often unaware of the opportunities open to them, do not want to use them, or think that education is only for the young. For example, fewer than 4% of employees eligible for employer-sponsored tuition assistance use those benefits. And the public in general is only gradually becoming aware of the need for ongoing education. The 1983 report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education speaks only of remedies in education for youth, reinforcing the myth that education is only for the young and the companion myth that adults have completed their schooling. Yet adults' education needs are at least as great as those of the young and constitute an equivalent obligation for policy and societal action. Clearly, a major effort is required to raise the level of awareness among education providers, government, prospective adult learners, and the general public.

IV. Components of the Solution

A Public Commitment to Adult Learning: The need for adult learning—and the impediments to meeting that need—touch many elements of our society. The problem is complicated and calls for a new degree of collaboration among government, education providers, employers, and learners. Such collaboration must include a fair sharing of the costs among all parties that stand to benefit.

Paradoxically, at the same time that the nation's human capital is being underutilized, its colleges and universities are losing clientele and becoming underused. Collegiate institutions could effectively join forces with the many other education providers—the military services, corporate education and training programs, training and telecommunications industries, and so on—to address the nations' education needs.

The Commission on Higher Education and the Adult Learner solicits the help of others who will join the effort: to focus national attention on adult learning as a major resource in solving the nation's economic and social dilemmas and, thereby, to inspire a new surge of hope and effort toward realizing our national potential.

We need a new policy in the federal government, in the 50 states, and in the corporations and educational institutions: that adults be enabled to continue learning—regardless of their financial resources, ethnic and socio-economic status, age, and sex—long enough and effectively enough to be competent in adult roles and to contribute productively to American life.

To achieve this goal, means must be adopted that do not diminish efforts on behalf of younger learners—they are the adults of tomorrow and no good will be served by solving today's crisis in ways that exacerbate tomorrow's problems.

A Federal Program for Adult Learners: The need for adult learning is national in scope; it must be addressed, at least in part, at the national level. Commitment backed by appropriate federal funding is an essential component of the solution. A minimal federal program would incorporate efforts to stimulate innovative adult learning services and programs, to ensure institutionalization of effective programs and services, to meet a variety of individual needs for financial assistance in continuing learning, to foster information and counseling services for adults, and to promote third party investment in the ongoing education of adults. The Commission's proposal for such a program appears as Appendix A.

Role of the States: The states have a crucial role in the orientation of higher education toward serving adult learners. Nearly 80% of college and university enrollments are in publicly funded institutions. They constitute the major postsecondary resource in education in metropolitan areas where the need is greatest. But there is great variation among the states in the extent of comprehensive planning and alternatives for lifelong learning. In only 22 of the 50 states is the postsecondary education commission also an institutional governing board; in the majority of states they are coordinating boards with restricted authority. But, as K. Patricia Cross has noted,

no matter what the level of participation or extent of planning and goal setting, states are being confronted with issues related to the increased presence of adults as learners. These issues can be grouped under four overarching concerns: providers, access, quality assurance, and economic revitalization.¹⁰

In the current year, the Commission is undertaking an examination of options open to the states in addressing these concerns and strengthening programs and services for adult learners.

Institutional Change: The expanding needs for adult learning cannot be met with full effectiveness in the absence of changes within many colleges and universities. And even the best providers recognize room for improvement. In the belief that the most effective and lasting changes come from within institutions, the Commission has sought ways to stimulate colleges and universities to reorient themselves through reviews of institutional mission and evaluation of performance. In 1984, the Commission published *Postsecondary Education Institutions and the Adult Learner: A Self-Study Assessment and Planning Guide*. It is designed to ascertain the current effectiveness of a total institution or of a unit within an institution in serving adult learners; it is also effective in assessing institutional readiness to serve an adult clientele. Through some of its Regional Conferences, the Commission addresses issues of institutional change. A fuller description of the Institutional Self-Assessment Project appears in Appendix B.

Collaboration and Cost-Sharing Among the Sectors: Federal and state programs cannot by themselves meet the nation's need for adult learning. Nor can any single sector of the American economy meet the challenge single-handedly. We need inventive collaboration among higher education, business, labor, and government. In preparing its proposals, the Commission stresses the importance of such collabora-

tion and strives for recommendations that preserve a division of labor among the diverse providers of education, that acknowledge the distinctions among institutions with different missions and responsibilities, and that provide for a fair sharing of costs among the beneficiaries of adult learning.

These proposals assume active cooperation among many providers of education in a variety of areas:

- employers and the work place;
- unions and the union hall;
- public and proprietary schools, colleges and universities and their classrooms, shops, and laboratories;
- the military and other governmental agencies at their sites;
- libraries and museums; and
- the telecommunications and computer systems, in the home and elsewhere.

We must build upon the models of cooperation that already operate well: work-study programs, university instructional television at the workplace, and faculty-designed computer-aided instruction. Yet we must also be careful to preserve the distinctions among providers. High quality educational service is needed from many different kinds of institutions. No single set of criteria will be adequate in judging the multiple efforts from diverse sources that are required to improve and expand adult learning.

We must fairly share the cost of this effort, taking into account public priorities, the national interest, and personal and corporate advantage. As we do so, we should balance direct grants and outright subsidies with new incentives to individual and third party investment in education. We must take full advantage of all the possible sources of funding — personal, state and federal, corporate, labor union, and philanthropic. We must distribute limited resources among a variety of learners:

- new and displaced workers;
- the economically and socially disadvantaged;
- the linguistically and functionally illiterate;
- employed people maintaining occupational currency;
- those being trained in the national interest; and
- avocational learners.

Given this diversity of learners, it is perhaps more realistic to establish priorities for the kinds of education needed than for categories of learners. In any event, we must establish a framework of cost sharing

et balances considerations of efficiency, fairness, and benefit so as to make the most effective use of the effort to meet national priorities for adult learning.

The Commission also seeks to stimulate collaborative activities beyond those outlined above in the following ways:

- regional conferences of labor, business, government, and higher education to address regional adult educational issues;
- increased intersector collaboration among national labor unions; business associations, corporate executives, elected officials, trainers, and continuing educators;
- new national, regional and local communication networks among those addressing these national needs; and
- additional proposals for funding adult learner services at state and local levels.

Appendix A

A PROGRAM FOR FEDERAL SUPPORT

The Commission endorses actions that stimulate new and more effective adult learning programs, that ensure their replication and that assure access regardless of the individuals' economic status. To accomplish these ends, we propose a multi-faceted approach consisting of support of research and innovation; strengthening of institutional capacity; elimination of discrimination against needy adult learners in access to student financial assistance; revisions in tax policy to encourage rather than discourage productive use of learning resources by the nation's work force; and creation of the information, counseling and guidance services that are necessary to make access and equity a reality.

STIMULATION OF INNOVATION IN THE DELIVERY OF ADULT LEARNING SERVICES

We propose a separate authorization to the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) to fund experimentation and innovation in adult learning services and delivery systems and to disseminate the fruits of successful efforts. Such an expenditure is consistent with the federal commitment to foster research and experimentation that improves the quality and availability of postsecondary education, and FIPSE already has a statutory mandate clearly in line with such an effort. We propose an additional and separate authorization for this purpose so as not to diminish the other essential activities carried out by this fine agency.

Funds appropriated for this purpose should be targeted towards projects that seek to develop new capabilities for postsecondary education to serve adult learners, such as models which:

- improve the delivery of instructional services for adult learners, particularly those which overcome the barriers of location and time;
- adapt for postsecondary use education and training methods developed in other sectors;
- integrate work-related instruction with general learning;
- enhance cooperation among business, labor and higher education;
- improve faculty competence in teaching adult learners; and
- improve the delivery and availability of noninstructional services for adult learners, particularly in the areas of information, guidance, and counseling.

We propose that innovation grants be available to the same broad spectrum of applicants as is the case for the FIPSE Comprehensive Grant program.

ENHANCING THE CAPACITY OF INSTITUTIONS TO DELIVER SERVICES TO ADULT LEARNERS

We propose a new program of multi-year challenge grants to stimulate the institutionalization of effective adult learning programs and services. Institutions willing to make a substantial commitment to the development and continued support of a comprehensive adult learning effort would be eligible to receive five-year, nonrenewable challenge grants, with federal support to be steadily replaced and enhanced over that period by locally derived resources. We propose that to qualify for an Adult Learning Challenge Grant, an institution will have to demonstrate not only its own commitment to serving adult learners but also the tangible support of the private sector, labor, state and local government and other nonprofit organizations as active participants in its efforts. Applicant institutions would be required to show how they would restructure their academic and support services to accommodate the needs of adult learners, and how their effort would serve a definable constituency.

We propose that the Challenge Grants be based on the number of adult learners to be served with a minimum grant of \$100,000. Grants would be awarded on a basis that would ensure geographic diversity and recognize the differing needs and contributions of public and independent institutions and those located in urban and rural settings.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR ADULT LEARNERS

The Commission recognizes that the availability of programs that serve adult learners is not sufficient if those who should take advantage of these offerings are excluded due to their financial condition. To achieve equity in serving the postsecondary education needs of adults, we propose a three-tiered approach to provide financial assistance to the truly needy adult learner.

First, we propose that higher education, business and labor join together to demand the full implementation of present provisions of law enacted over the past several years to reduce inequities visited upon adult learners in their access to student financial assistance. Arguing for new sources of support is without meaning if the administering agen-

cies, and to some extent the institutions themselves, are reluctant to make use of even the limited aid already afforded.

Second, we propose that grant and loan resources be extended to qualified needy adult learners regardless of the intensity of their enrollment, so long as they are enrolled in a postsecondary program leading to a degree or certificate or providing training for a recognized occupation. We propose the creation of a program of direct grants for truly needy adult learners to enable them to enroll in formal postsecondary programs that are intended to enable them to maintain employability, advance within their field or enter or re-enter the job market.

Third, we propose that a comprehensive study be undertaken to determine the resources and programmatic requirements necessary to generally afford needy adult learners access to the education and training they require.

STIMULATION OF ADULT LEARNING AMONG THE UNEMPLOYED

We propose that those who are receiving unemployment compensation benefits be afforded the opportunity to trade in a portion of those benefits for postsecondary education services, with each dollar traded in matched at least one-for-one with additional resources. We further propose that the use of this benefit not jeopardize an individual's continued eligibility for unemployment compensation during the defined duration of the postsecondary program of instruction.

ELIMINATING DISINCENTIVES TO ADULT LEARNING

We propose amending the federal Tax Code to eliminate provisions that penalize those who engage in adult learning activities and discourage employers from supporting such services.

We propose extending the deductibility of individual educational expenses except for instruction that is purely recreational. We believe that it is important to the economic health, social welfare and security of the nation to encourage persons to advance their abilities and careers so as to maintain competence in their existing jobs, particularly as we enter an era when technological obsolescence is likely to affect entire industries as well as particular skills.

We also propose consideration of tax provisions that would encourage corporate investment in postsecondary education, particularly for programs that are designed to improve the competencies of the work force and that strengthen the ability of postsecondary institutions to

provide effective adult learning programs. We propose that present programs that afford tax preference for the donation of scientific equipment be expanded to encompass equipment and facilities used for adult learning purposes.

We propose further study of incentives for individual saving to defray the cost of future learning needs, including consideration of the creation of an Education Security Fund and tax-favored Education Maintenance Accounts.

BRIDGING THE INFORMATION GAP

We recognize that the most aggressive investment of public funds in improving the ability of institutions to deliver adult learning services, and in affording individuals the economic wherewithal to access such services will not succeed if this nation does not forcefully address the need for information and support services to enable persons to make intelligent decisions. The lack of comprehensive adult learning information, guidance and counseling services is a national disgrace, and we propose a major federal initiative be carried out in partnership with the states, to remedy this failure. We propose a federal grant program to the states to enable them to establish comprehensive adult learning information and counseling services, with the proviso that such services be created and operated in close collaboration with business, labor and postsecondary institutions that are providing the instructional services.

Finally, we propose the creation of a national information network, financed through user fees, that would afford ready access to current information on adult learning opportunities and link potential adult learners with local counseling, guidance and support services.

CONCLUSION

We recognize that in an era of looming budget deficits any proposal for increased federal spending must be considered with great care. We believe, however, that the ability of this nation to compete in the world marketplace and to maintain its strength as the bulwark of democracy will increasingly depend upon an educated and trained populace. We cannot afford to have that education and training stop at age eighteen or twenty two; the future of America demands that the continuing needs of our nation of learners be served. We believe that expenditures we propose are therefore investments which will return many fold to the public fisc and to the public weal.

THE INSTITUTIONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT PROJECT

The Commission on Higher Education and the Adult Learner has published *Postsecondary Education Institutions and the Adult Learner: A Self-Study Assessment and Planning Guide* to assist college and university presidents and key administrators in ascertaining the current effectiveness of their institutions in serving adult learners, or their readiness to do so. When fully executed, the assessment and planning process facilitated by the *Guide* will also provide basic information for institutional planning with respect to instruction and services for adult learners.

The *Guide* is being developed and disseminated through grants from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education and the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations. During the past year it has been field-tested by 14 institutions in the Great Lakes and South Central Regions with very promising results.

College and university presidents have been given an opportunity to order a complimentary copy of the *Guide* so that they may evaluate its usefulness to their institutions. In addition to its utility in institutional assessment and planning, the *Guide* can be an aid to self-study for purposes of accreditation or state approval if used in the context of the appropriate authority's standards and procedures.

The Commission believes that the *Guide* can be used with full effectiveness only as a team effort initiated with the full support of the chief executive of the institution or system. Using the *Guide* simply as a questionnaire without incorporating it into a more comprehensive process is likely to prove ineffectual.

To assist colleges and universities in using the *Guide* effectively, the Commission is offering regionally located workshops during 1984 and 1985. Presidentially appointed institutional teams of senior administrators work with Commission-trained Assessment Facilitators for a day and a half in preparing to use the *Guide* to maximum benefit on their own campuses. Of course, final responsibility for executing the self-study and planning process rests with the campus leadership, so presidents are encouraged to engage their most capable senior administrators in this process.

The Commission is seeking a broad representation of postsecondary institutions, by type and location, to participate in its first round of

workshops. Each institution selected for participation is represented at the workshop by at least two but no more than four senior administrators (e.g., president, chief academic officer, chief student personnel officer, dean of unit within a university, etc.) appointed by the chief executive. Each team receives without charge a complete set of materials for conducting the assessment.

Grants received for this project provide for training and materials without cost to participants. Limited funds are available and additional funds are being sought to assist institutions in partially meeting costs of travel and per diem associated with the workshops. When institutions are notified about participating they are informed of available funding. Training workshops are scheduled in response to demand within each region. Institutions from among those that have applied in the region are selected to participate.

From among the applicants, a select group of representative institutions has been invited and funded to monitor and report their experiences in conducting the assessment and planning process and in effecting the results. Provision has been made to publish selected reports in 1986.

In this project, the Commission and its sponsors have been joined by the National University Continuing Education Association (NUCEA).

Notes

1. Anthony Patrick Carnevale, "Higher Education's Role in the American Economy," *Educational Record*, Fall 1983, page 12.
2. Harold Hodgkinson, "Guess Who's Coming to College," NIICU Research Report, Washington, D.C. 1982.
3. Anthony Patrick Carnevale, *Human Capital: A High Yield Corporate Investment*, Washington, D.C.: American Society for Training and Development, 1982.
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5. Carnevale, *op. cit.* page 12.
6. Pat Choate, *Retooling the American Work Force: Toward a National Training Strategy*. Washington, D.C.: Northeast Midwest Institute, 1982.
7. John H. Strange, "Preparing for Tomorrow Today: Faculty Training for the New Technologies," *Bulletin of the American Association for Higher Education*, Vol. 36, No. 2, October 1983.
8. Arthur W. Chickering, "Competencies and Characteristics Required for Literacy, Employability, Occupational Success and Effective Citizenship", Unpublished, available from the Commission office.
9. For example, see Jay Mathews, "Retraining '83: the Class in Room E221," *Washington Post*, November 6, 1983, page 1.
10. K. Patricia Cross & Anne-Marie McCartan, *Adult Learning: State Policies and Institutional Practices*. Washington, D.C.: Association for the Study of Higher Education, 1984.